

CREATING A CLEAN WATER PARTNERSHIP FOR IOWA

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES ♦ USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE ♦ SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND LAND STEWARDSHIP – DIVISION OF SOIL CONSERVATION

Iowans across the state are taking ownership of their local lakes, rivers and backyard creeks by working to improve water quality. While improving our waters can seem like a daunting task, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Division of Soil Conservation (DSC), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) can help local groups looking to make a big impact on water quality.

GRASSROOTS EFFORTS FOR BETTER WATER

The DNR, DSC, NRCS and SWCDs work together with Iowans to form local, organized watershed projects. Projects help landowners and residents make changes on land that drains into a lake, river or stream (a watershed). Those changes on the land help stop erosion and filter water to prevent pollutants from washing into our water.

Since most land in Iowa is privately owned, watershed projects work with landowners, both urban and rural. Organized projects can provide landowners financial assistance to use conservation practices, which are ways to manage the land for better water quality. Projects can also organize community events to help improve water quality.

HELPING IOWANS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Local watershed projects and SWCDs can partner with the DNR, DSC and NRCS through grants that go beyond funding, offering the knowledge and experience of water quality professionals on project planning and guidance, technical assistance, technical issues and tools, and creating public relations efforts.

The agencies work with local projects to assess the watershed's needs, whether the water quality problem is erosion control, bacteria, excessive nutrients or another issue. Grants from the agencies help projects target the most critical areas and apply conservation measures. Those measures can be structural (sediment basins, terraces, ponds, grassed waterways, pasture planting, etc.) or better management by land users (no-till, contouring, filter strips, field borders, etc.).

CLEANER WATER ENHANCES QUALITY OF LIFE

Better water helps improve the quality of life we value as Iowans. Everyone wants cleaner drinking water, and improved water quality can also be a boon for local communities. Cleaner water creates a healthier home for fish and wildlife, which can

mean better fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing, leading to increased tourism and economic growth. Watershed work can help slow runoff water to reduce the risk of flooding, protecting roads, bridges and property. It also helps keep soil and nutrients in place, maintaining productive farmland, enhancing soil quality and sustaining Iowa's economic base.

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Making continued improvements to Iowa's water quality will take time, but Iowans are making progress. For example, the Lake Darling Watershed Project has worked with landowners to keep more than 16,000 tons of soil out of the lake each year. Read more about Lake Darling and other successes at <http://watershed.iowadnr.gov/success.html>.

CREATING FUTURE SUCCESSES

In addition to about 50 ongoing watershed projects (see reverse for map), SWCDs, DNR, DSC and NRCS are partnering with Iowans on these new or expanded projects:

- Littlefield Lake, Audubon County
- Nutting Creek and Mink Creek, Fayette County
- Prairie Creek, Clinton County
- Prairie Rose Lake, Shelby County
- Rathbun Lake, Appanoose County
- Union Grove, Tama County
- Walnut Creek, Poweshiek County



clean water
starts with you.

MEET THE PARTNERS

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Iowa's 100 SWCDs are local government agencies, each managed by five elected commissioners. Commissioners work with rural and urban landowners and water users to assess soil and surface water resources and prevent damages from erosion and floodwater. Along with partners like DNR, DSC and NRCS, SWCDs lead local efforts to address Iowa's critical natural resources issues.

www.iowaagriculture.gov/soilConservation.asp

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

The DNR's Watershed Improvement Program works with

watershed groups across Iowa, assisting with project guidance, technical assistance, public relations efforts and more. DNR Fisheries, Wildlife, Forestry and Water Monitoring also work with watershed efforts. <http://watershed.iowadnr.gov>

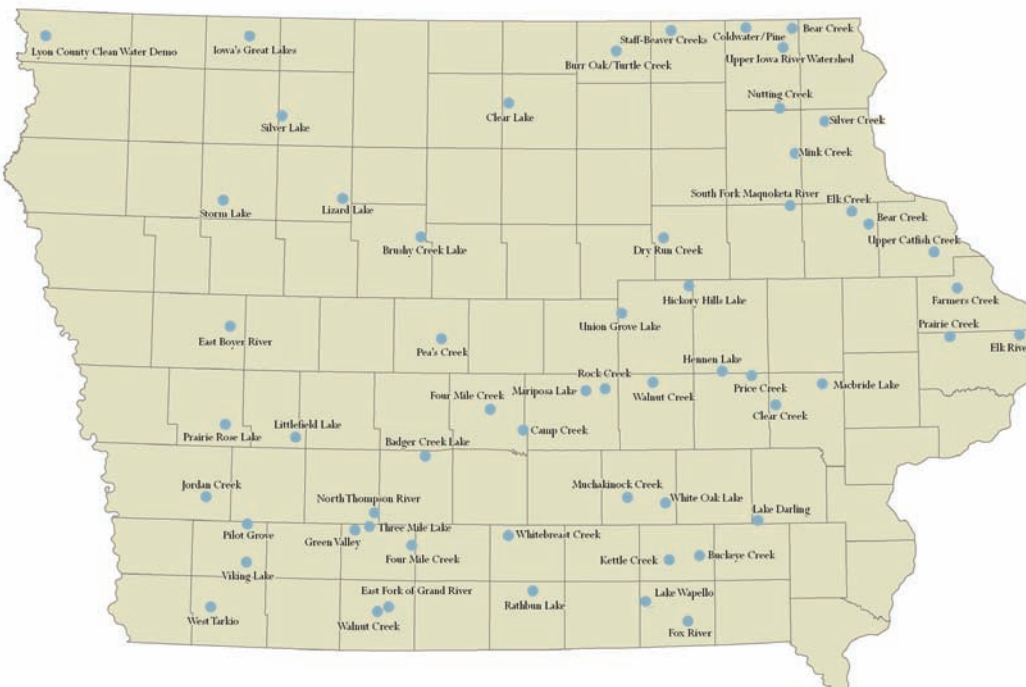
Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship—Division of Soil Conservation

The DSC provides state leadership in the protection and management of soil, water and mineral resources. Technical and financial assistance is available to individuals and to watershed groups through cost-sharing, low and no-interest loans and

watershed planning and implementation grants.

www.iowaagriculture.gov

CURRENT DNR, DSC AND NRCS WATERSHED PROJECTS



Natural Resources Conservation Service

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provides conservation planning technical assistance, as well as financial assistance. From helping develop nutrient management plans to designing and installing sediment control basins, the NRCS conservation planners, engineers and technicians offer a wide variety of assistance to producers in watershed project areas.

www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov

Left: Current Iowa watershed projects working with SWCDs, DNR, DSC and NRCS to improve our lakes, streams and rivers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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The publication of this document has been funded by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Nonpoint Source Management Program (Section 319 of the Clean Water Act). Federal and State laws prohibit employment and/or public accommodation (such as access to services or physical facilities) discrimination on the basis of age, color, creed, disability (mental and/or physical), gender identity, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, 1-800-457-4416, or write to Iowa DNR, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. Ninth St., Des Moines, Iowa, 50319.